# CINEMA STUDIES

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# CINEMA STUDIES

*Editors :*

NEVILLE MARCH HUNNINGS and JOHN GILLETT

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## EDITORIAL

When the first issue of *Cinema Studies* was published we thought hat we were practically unique in the world. But ever since then ve have been discovering people or groups all engaged in or hoping o organise research into the cinema of a more or less historical ature. Contacts throughout the world have been spreading and it s clear that there are many individual scholars in the Common- vealth and elsewhere who have little contact with any official body n their studies and who may well benefit from help and encourage- nent. To these may be added the research groups, either formally onstituted as in the Netherlands, or else loosely attached to the rchive, in some of the smaller countries. These usually encourage ndividual work by particular scholars or embark on a scheme of roup research over a broad field. Finally there are the archives nemselves, linked together in their Federation, which in general ndertake themselves little research unconnected with the work of he archive, and serve more as sources of material for private esearch workers than initiators of schemes of study.

In addition to this complex of varying activity, there are a few niversities which include the study of the cinema among their ctivities. The University of Nijmegen has for a long time had a hair of Cinema Studies, and many of the Eastern European coun- ies and the United States have Institutes or University courses here advanced study of the cinema can take place. The latest of ese is a Lectureship in the Cinema at University College, London. he nature of the work varies. In many there is an emphasis upon e practical work of film-making, and theoretical studies are under- ken more as an aid to the student in his understanding of his osen craft ; the needs of an undergraduate student body inevitably ould the nature of the work done. Even courses for future film itics must concentrate on the technique of criticism and the basic pparatus of the novice. It is more in postgraduate work that we ust look to find new discoveries and the solid hard work of mpilation and classification, the study of the cinema in depth ttle by little. The cinema itself, however, is still suspect and in ostgraduate bodies it is more often studied as a sociological henomenon, as a branch of sociology, than for its own sake. The luable work done by the Institut de Filmologie in Paris has long ncentrated on this aspect, and rumour has it that the new lecture- ip at University College will also concentrate on sociology. This valuable and should provide much needed information and

understanding. But there remains a vast field connected with the cinema which is comparatively untouched, especially in this country.

The subject which links together all the various aspects of the cinema, aesthetics, technique, trade, equipment, sociology, regulation, that which shows their interaction one with another, which binds all into a meaningful pattern, is history. History, too, has its parochial aspect. Many people begin historical research out of sheer joy in detection, in deduction of the " facts " from the available evidence. But underlying all this, there is the desire to create order, to show the pattern in apparently chaotic events, to show the chain of cause and effect, the reason why. Documentation is not history, although a historian needs chronicles as an architect needs bricks. A mere recitation of facts is not enough. It is something, in our present dearth, but it is only a first step. The need is for the creation of a sufficient number of scholars, well-read and knowledgeable about the cinema, who from their knowledge and understanding can show the conflicting patterns of the cinema's development and describe with imagination the influences on it and from it at crucial periods.

The fundamental question for us must always be: why do the films we see take the forms they do? In pursuit of the answer to this question nothing is barred. There is as much need for the moles, unearthing facts and information and presenting it to us in convenient form, as for those with the synoptic eye who will use these facts, and others, and their knowledge of other aspects of life and society, to construct a pattern of development which will enable us to see the cinema, and the film, as a whole, as a living thing, developing and degenerating here only to redevelop somewhere else, and all the time influencing and interacting. We are interested in the cinema, and we want to know as much about it as we can.

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# THE ORIGINS OF FILM CENSORSHIP IN INDIA

*By* NEVILLE MARCH HUNNINGS*

The film began its life in India, as in many other countries, with an exhibition by the Lumière cinematograph in 1896 in Bombay.[1] Its popularity increased, and by 1910 many cinema halls had sprung up in the cities, while travelling showmen took the new entertainment to some of the rural areas. But the films exhibited were of foreign origin until the first film to be made in India, *Harischandra*, directed by Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, was shown in December, 1912, at the Coronation Cinema, Bombay. During the following seven years the Indian film production industry, led by Phalke, grew on a diet consisting almost exclusively of mythological subjects, which were immensely popular with the audiences. By 1921 the number of cinemas had increased from about 100 to 148; and during the year 1921-22 there were 63 Indian-made feature films submitted to the censor boards with a total length of 332,228 feet.[2]

But in 1918 the growing popularity and influence of films, which were still mostly foreign (over 90 per cent. in 1921-22), caused Government to take its first steps towards the regulation of the cinema industry; the Cinematograph Act of that year[3] laid down rules for the censorship of films and the licensing of cinemas. Censorship had existed before 1918, exercised by voluntary boards in random localities, but little information is available about these. No specific censorship powers had been granted by legislation, and these boards must have been rather watch committees to enforce the ordinary criminal law, especially those provisions of the Indian Penal Code which forbid the publication of matter which is obscene (ss. 292-4, 509), or will wound religious susceptibilities (s. 298), or incite disaffection against the Government (s. 124A). For all practical purposes, film censorship in India began in 1918.

The Cinematograph Act provided that "no person shall give an exhibition by means of a cinematograph elsewhere than in a place licensed under this Act, or otherwise than in compliance with any conditions and restrictions imposed by such licence." Licences were to be granted by the District Magistrate or (in the Presidency towns) by the Commissioner of Police. The Act further required that no film should be exhibited unless it had been first certified by the proper authority as suitable for public exhibition, and the Provincial Governments were authorised to set up authorities to examine and certify films for this purpose. Boards of Censors were subsequently set up in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Rangoon (all in 1920), and Lahore (in 1927); and the five Provincial Governments all issued Rules regulating the certification of films and the conditions to be attached to cinema licences. A certificate granted by any Board of Censors was to be valid throughout British India, but could be

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1 Panna Shah *The Indian Film*, Bombay, 1950, p. 20. This unique history of the Indian cinema has been an invaluable source for the background to this article.

2 Report of the Indian Cinematograph Committee, 1927-1928, pp. 179 seqq.

3 Amended by the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 1919, and the Devolution Act, 1920.

suspended and annulled in any Province on the initiative of the Provincial Government, Board of Censors, District Magistrate (or Commissioner of Police).

During the following decade the system seems to have worked satisfactorily. No rigid set of rules was laid down, and the "Suggestions to Inspectors of Films" issued by the Bombay Board of Film Censors begins with three general principles: (*a*) no generally and rigidly applicable rules of censorship can be laid down; (*b*) it is essential to be consistent but impossible to aim at strictly logical decisions; (*c*) each film must be judged on its own merits. But this did not prevent a body of precedents from being built up to be used for the great majority of films examined.

During this period also the subject matter of the films was changing. The mythological films came to an end in 1920, and were followed by a cycle of "Rajput" films (costume melodramas) and stunt films (after the example of Douglas Fairbanks); "social" films (films dealing with modern life) also made their appearance. The expansion of the film industry, in both the quantity and nature of its output,[1] was accompanied by complaints from individuals and organisations, both Indian and British, as to the alleged leniency of the Censorship Boards; and in 1927 the Indian Cinematograph Committee was set up to, *inter alia*, "examine and report on the system of censorship of cinematograph films in India." Its Report, issued in 1928, contains much valuable information about the Indian film industry, and the Committee concluded that the complaints of over-leniency were not justified. It did, however, make detailed suggestions for a centralised censorship body. Under the 1918 Act, as amended in 1919 and 1920, film censorship was a function of the Provincial Governments, and it had been suggested that the five Censorship Boards followed different standards in their examinations, thus causing unnecessary inconvenience to the exhibitors. The Committee found that this was not so; that the Boards had between them examined to date 13,000 films of which only some 31 had been subsequently banned in another Province. However, the Committee considered that even such a small measure of disagreement was undesirable, and they proposed the creation of a Central Board of Censors for the whole of British India. Government, however, took no action on this recommendation, and the suggestion was only put into effect, after much further agitation, in 1949.

No substantial changes were made in the censorship system as a result of the Committee's Report for another 20 years. In 1933, as a result of strong representation by the Muslim community, a Muslim was appointed to each of the Censorship Boards.[2] The new Constitution of 1935 placed theatres, dramatic performances and cinemas on the provincial list, and the "sanctioning of cinematograph films for exhibition" on the concurrent list; this made no difference to the existing situation, but provided for the possibility of a central censorship board later. The industry itself continued to

1 By 1927 there were 346 cinemas in India and Burma (80 in Burma) of which 309 were permanent cinemas, having a total seating capacity of 222,655 persons. In the year 1927-28 there were 1,590 films examined by the censorship boards having a total length of 5,806,904 feet, the proportion of Indian films having increased to 15.26 per cent. (161 films with a total length of 886,477 feet)—1927-1928 Report.

2 S *International Review of Educational Cinematography* 753 (November, 1933).

grow. In 1931 the first Indian talkie, *Alam Ara*, was made by Ardeshir M. Irani, and in 1932 the Motion Picture Society of India was formed. When in May, 1939, the silver jubilee of the Indian film industry was celebrated in Bombay, it had become the third largest film industry in the world and the eighth most important industry in India.[1] For a population of 350 million there were 1,265 cinemas, and the annual production of the Indian film studios was in the region of 200.

The war-time emergency brought some changes. In 1943 a licence became necessary before a producer could begin a new or reprint an old film,[2] and cinemas were required to show 2,000 feet of "approved" film in their programmes.[3] These "approved" films were usually Government documentaries, for which the exhibitors had to pay the usual hire fees, and have been the cause of much complaint from the exhibitors. Owing to the shortage of raw film stock, films were restricted to a maximum length of 11,000 feet,[4] which left the producers very little margin since no film under 10,000 feet long stood much chance of popular success. After the war, in 1946, the first All-India Film Conference was held in Bombay, and the following year came independence and partition.

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The accession of the Congress Party Government in 1946 marked the beginning of a new period of development of film censorship in India, and the grant of independence the following year accentuated this trend. The Government's puritanical attitude to moral questions resulted not only in the enforcement of liquor prohibition throughout India,[5] but also involved an increased strictness towards morality in films, and for the first time the censorship boards began to base a large part of their cuts on sexual grounds. In the course of the following decade the Indian film censorship has become one of the strictest in the world.[6]

The first variation in procedure came at the end of 1948, when Madras and Bombay both published a "production code," a set of suggestions to producers for guidance in the production of feature films "with a view to ensuring that the cinema plays its proper role in the building up of a healthy national life."[7] This followed a complaint by the Home Minister of Bombay that there was too much frivolity in current Indian films which had to be avoided if the industry was to justify its claims as a medium of enlightenment and education, and was an attempt to aid the pro-

1 B. V. Dharap *Motion Picture Year Book of India*, 1940, p. vii.

2 17th July, 1943. Repealed on 15th December, 1945.

3 Defence of India Rule 44a, 15th September, 1943.

4 15th May, 1942.

5 "If the scenes are meant, on the other hand, to make fun of the idea of prohibition, to ridicule Government who have decided on the programme of prohibition. . . . or to glorify drink, to show it as a fashion or to describe it as a social custom about which there is nothing wrong, . . . to paint it as healthy, honourable or respectable . . . . , then such scenes are objectionable and will be removed from the films."—Government of Bombay reported in *Journal of the Film Industry*, June, 1947, p. 11.

6 See in particular the comments by F. J. Berthold and Horst von Hartlieb in *Filmrecht: ein handbuch*, Munich, 1957.

7 These codes differ from the above-mentioned "Suggestions to Inspectors of Films" in that they are directed to the film producers in an attempt to prevent films being made, rather than to the inspectors and censors who will ban already made films or sequences.

ducers to adjust themselves to the new stricter attitude of the censorship boards. A further suggestion by the Bombay Home Minister that scripts should be submitted to the censorship boards before shooting began was rejected by the producers.[1]

But the following year, 1949, saw much greater changes in the administration of film censorship. Two of the war-time emergency measures (which had all been repealed by 1946) were re-introduced administratively by becoming standard terms in the licences of cinema exhibitors. These were the 11,000 feet rule,[2] and the compulsory exhibition of 1,000 feet of Government-approved film in each programme.[3] At the same time the Film Enquiry Committee was appointed under Shri S. K. Patil to (*inter alia*) "enquire into the growth and the organisation of the film industry in India and to indicate the lines on which further development should be directed; and to examine what measures should be adopted to enable films in India to develop into an effective instrument for the promotion of national culture, education and healthy entertainment."

But the important changes occurred through two new statutes. The Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 1949, created two new categories of censorship certificate: "A," restricted to adults above the age of 18 years; and "U," unrestricted as to audience. This was the first time that such categories of classification had been used in India.

The Cinematograph (Second Amendment) Act, 1949, introduced at last, 21 years after the Report of the Cinematograph Committee and after much agitation by the industry itself, a Central Board of Film Censors, which took to itself the powers of the previous provincial boards, but retained the latter as regional sub-committees for the purpose of viewing films. This Act came into force in January, 1951, simultaneously with the Cinematograph (Censorship) Rules, 1951 (replaced by a new set of Rules in 1958), which set out the composition and *modus operandi* of the Central Board. Speaking at the first meeting of the Central Board the then Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Mr. R. B. Diwakar, said that the early conception of censorship as a police function had changed to "the present dignified effort to model an effective medium of healthy entertainment, national culture and mass education"[4]; and a month later the Chairman of the Board stated that although the Rules made no provision for precensorship of scripts, the Board would be happy to assist producers by examining scripts in advance and suggesting changes wherever desirable (as had been done on a voluntary basis by the Provincial Boards).[5] This was followed in 1952 by the publication by the Board of a code,[6] four pages of detailed instruc-

1 Bombay appears as the moving spirit in all provincial legislation during this period, being the largest centre for film production, while Madras and Calcutta, the other two centres, each account for a further quarter of the total Indian production. Lahore and Rangoon, which completed the five censorship boards in 1928, are now in Pakistan and Burma respectively.

2 *Handbook of the Indian Film Industry*, 1949, p. xxxi. All Provinces except Madras limited feature films to 11,000 feet and trailers to 400 feet from August/September, 1949.

3 Film Enquiry Committee Report, 1951, p. 23.

4 *Journal of the Film Industry*, January, 1951.

5 *Ibid.*, February, 1951.

6 "Directive to Examining Committees regarding the principles to be observed in determining whether a film is or is not suitable for public exhibition."

tions regarding objectionable matter in films, " as it is desirable that there shall, as far as possible, be a uniform standard for determining whether a film is suitable or not for unrestricted public exhibition or for public exhibition restricted to adults."

Also in 1951, the Film Enquiry Committee issued its Report. Unlike the 1927-28 Committee, it had devoted only a small part of its efforts to the censorship problem, but what it did have to say was far-reaching. Indeed, it proposed nothing less than a wholesale reorganisation of the complete censorship system. This was to come about through the institution of a Film Council, a " central authority to superintend and regulate the film industry, to act as its guide, friend and philosopher, and to advise the Central and State Governments in regard to various matters connected with the production, distribution and exhibition of films." There would also be set up an organisation " practically on the lines of the Production Code Administration in the U.S.A." which would insist on the shooting script being approved by it before the film is shot. The Committee considered that separate legislation would not be necessary for such a body provided that the Government had followed its recommendation to set up a Film Council. They envisaged " the Production Code Administration as an adjunct to the Film Council just as we visualise that in course of time the Council would be able to take up the functions of the Boards of Censors."

Although the Government showed some sympathy with the desire for centralisation of control which was emphasised strongly by the Committee, it nevertheless did little to give effect to their recommendations. The report came too late to influence the new consolidating statue—the Cinematograph Act, 1952—and action was further hampered by the 1949 Constitution which had placed the film industry on the State list (subject only to the approval of films for exhibition being the responsibility of the Union Government). The Government several times stated that if necessary they would amend the Constitution in order to centralise control of the industry,[1] and provision for this was actually made in the Cinematograph Bill, 1956[2]; but the Bill was dropped in August, 1957[3] on the grounds of economy. In 1953 Dr. B. V. Keskar, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, stated in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) that " there are many difficulties in the way of forming a Film Council " but that proposals regarding the Production Code Administration and Film Institute (another recommendation of the Committee) would be placed before Parliament.[4] In May, 1954, he said that a National Film Board would be set up to supervise two new bodies : a Film Production Bureau and a Film Institute. These bodies, plus a Film Certification Bureau, were provided in the Cinematograph Bill which was introduced into the Rajya Sabha in December, 1956, but lapsed when the Bill was withdrawn, and have not so far been revived.

At the same time as these Government attempts to centralise control over the cinema, the industry itself was seeking the same

1 Dr. B. V. Keskar, during the debate in the Rajya Sabha on the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 1953, on 29th April, 1953 (col. 4375); and also in the Lok Sabha on 4th April, 1955 (col. 4198).

2 Text printed in *Journal of the Film Industry*, December, 1956—January, 1957. Introduced into the Rajya Sabha on 10th December, 1956 (col. 1907).

3 *Journal of the Film Industry*, August, 1957.

4 29th April, 1953 (col. 4373).

thing. The Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association passed a unanimous resolution in 1951 approving a system of self-censorship by the industry, and a sub-committee was formed to investigate machinery to attain this end.[1] The ground was prepared in 1953 when the Association set up a Production Code Administration and a cartel (to provide disciplinary sanctions on recalcitrant members), and in 1953 a special censorship sub-committee was set up. But although the closer discipline was valuable in other spheres of the industry, the voluntary censorship never reached sufficient proportions to make superfluous, and oust, government regulation, and by 1958 it was clear that the attempt at self-regulation by the industry itself had for the moment failed.[2]

Two important amendments were made in 1953. The Cinematograph Rules were altered so as to limit the validity of a censorship certificate to a period of five years.[3] This was because "the initial certificate permitting exhibition of a film follows an examination in which the standards applied are conditioned by existing values, fashions and trends. It would be unreasonable, therefore, to expect that a certificate granted once with regard to the then conditions and criteria would never fall out of tune with prevalent standards. In most cases it is expected it will be possible for (the Board) to renew the certificate without having to re-examine the film." This was very unpopular with the trade, and gave rise to a great deal of criticism; in 1958 the period was extended to ten years.

The other amendment, which also increased the Government's power over the industry, was contained in the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 1953. Section 6 of the 1952 Act had provided that the Central Government could unilaterally restrict the showing of a film passed by the Central Board of Film Censors, either by re-certifying a "U" film as "A," or by declaring a film to be uncertified, the latter action requiring two weeks' notice before coming into effect. In 1953 the Government wished to ban the film *Peking Express*, and, finding themselves frustrated in practice by the need for two weeks' notice, passed the amendment which abolished the requirement of notice, and at the same time provided that the exhibition of any film could be suspended for such period (not exceeding two months) as might be specified.

The attitude of the Government towards the film industry has appeared unsympathetic, and has received a great deal of hostile criticism; but it has also had to resist (and has resisted) considerable pressure from members of Parliament, the Congress Party,

1 *Journal of the Film Industry*, October, 1951. The sub-committee reported a scheme which envisaged that the IMPPA's Censorship Board would consist of an independent Chairman not directly connected with the film industry, with members drawn from producers, distributors and exhibitors and also persons outside the film industry. Its functions would be (1) to guide producers in all matters connected with the production code (to be drafted); (2) to examine pictures to ensure that they do not contain anything objectionable to public interests and (3) to protect pictures passed by it from any unreasonable interference by Government censors.

2 "We have been toying with many ideas whereby the Industry could self-regulate—maybe in the field of censorship, publicity or finance. So far all such moves have proved abortive either due to lack of sufficient determination or sabotaged by interested parties"—Editorial in *Journal of the Film Industry* June, 1958.

3 Rule 27b, introduced by SRO 1953/143 of 17th January, 1953.

and outside pressure groups for even more severe control over films. Dr. B. V. Keskar summed up the position in a speech to the All India Conference in Bombay on 7th July, 1952 : "There is a reference in the Chairman's speech to the question of censorship. From the time of the formation of the present Censor Board, we had advised it to allow the industry to have sufficient freedom as an experiment. We did this in the hope that the industry will realise its responsibilities and live up to the expectations that we formed of them. I regret that the results are unfortunate and there has been serious deterioration in the standard of production and vulgar and lewd scenes and songs are becoming common. Government is receiving increasing criticism against the present trend in production from the public and the Press. I would like to give a friendly warning to the industry that it is not possible for the Government to continue this way unless it finds an immediate change in the standard of films. If the films continue as at present we will be obliged to have a stricter censorship."[1] In the same speech he said that nobody would be happier than the Government if it could do away with censorship and rely on the industry's self-censorship.

Pressures on the Government were strong. On 25th August, 1954, Dr. Keskar replied to a petition advocating greater control over films which had been presented by 13,000 housewives and other women. In 1955 a letter was sent to Dr. Keskar by Mr. Shrinam Narayan, General Secretary of Congress, containing the views of a Congress Working Party and of 64 M.P.'s on the subject. On 10th December, 1954, a debate was held in the Rajya Sabha on the motion: "This House is of the opinion that moral standards in the country are affected to a considerable extent as a result of the exhibition of undesirable films and recommends to the Government to take such steps as are necessary either by legislation or otherwise, to prohibit the exhibition of such films, whether foreign or Indian" ; the motion was passed. And on 17th August, 1956, the Lok Sabha (Lower House) passed a private member's resolution, by Mr. C. R. Narasimhan, suggesting that the Government seek additional powers if necessary for improving the standard of films in the interests of national unity and social progress.

The major defence of the Government to this barrage was to pray in aid the Constitution,[2] and to deny that the Government could be held responsible for any film passed by the Board of Censors (since Parliament had insisted when passing the Cinematograph Rules, 1951, that Government should not have the final word in passing any film). This did not, however, prevent Dr. Keskar from stating that if Parliament felt that there should be stricter censorship in the interest of the welfare of society, the Government would be prepared to take the necessary steps. Nor did it prevent Government from taking at least certain steps, either morally, as when Prime Minister Nehru remarked that films which sought to depict

1 Reported in the *Journal of the Film Industry*, July, 1953.

2 "It was not possible for the Government in view of the constitutional position to go any further"—Dr. Keskar in the Lok Sabha, 25th August, 1954 ; "While Government have every sympathy with the representations received against the exhibition of the film on the life of Sardar Bhagat Singh, they have no constitutional powers to intervene in the matter"—Dr. Keskar in the Rajya Sabha, 10th September, 1954 ; "The Government could not assume wider powers re censorship as some members had suggested because they could not ignore the Constitutional limitations"—Dr. Keskar in the Rajya Sabha, 18th February, 1959.

the people of Africa as primitive savages were to say the least " not in good taste " and expressed the hope that the Board of Film Censors would go into the question,[1] or actually; for the power under section 6 of the 1952 Act to uncertify films has not been allowed to lie dormant. In November of that year the film *Shin Shinaki Bubla Boo* was declared uncertified in all India because it was " of low moral tone, throws the glamour of romance and heroism over criminal characters, treats sacred subjects irreverently, and is opposed to the interests of public decency and morality." Since then a number of other films, passed by the Board of Film Censors, have been uncertified by the Central Government, including *Peking Express, The Planter's Wife, Road to Bali, Sensualità, Fall of Berlin, Dial M for Murder, Rails into Laramie,* and *Baby Doll.*

1 *Journal of the Film Industry,* October, 1955.

# NUCLEUS OF A BRITISH FILM BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film is preparing an international bibliography of books on the cinema to contain deails of several hundred volumes of the more important works. One of the major projects of the Society for Film History Research is the compilation of a complete bibliography of British books on the cinema. To serve as a nucleus for this bibliography we are printing details of those works which are being submitted to F.I.A.F. from Britain. This list comprises the most important British books on the cinema and contains full bibliographical details of them in all English editions. Foreign translations and editions are not included.

1. **Charles Davy** (ed.). FOOTNOTES TO THE FILM.

   London : Lovat Dickson, 1937.
   x, 346 pp. front. 25 pl. illus. index.

   London : Readers' Union, 1938.
   xii, 334 pp. front. 14 pl. illus. index.

   Essays on various aspects of the cinema by Alfred Hitchcock, Robert Donat, Basil Wright, Graham Greene, Alberto Cavalcanti, John Betjeman, Maurice Jaubert, Paul Nash, John Grierson, Alexander Korda, Basil Dean, Maurice Kann, Elisabeth Bowen, Sidney L. Bernstein, Alistair Cooke, Forsyth Hardy, Charles Davy.

2. **Forsyth Hardy** (ed.) GRIERSON ON DOCUMENTARY.

   London : Collins, 1946.
   256 pp. 24 pl. index.

   A history of the documentary film movement in essays by John Grierson.

3. **Henry V. Hopwood** LIVING PICTURES: THEIR HISTORY, PHOTOPRODUCTION AND PRACTICAL WORKING, WITH A DIGEST OF BRITISH PATENTS AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY.

London: The Optician and Photographic Trades Review, 1899.
xxvii, 276 pp. illus. bibl. index.

2nd ed. revised and enlarged by R. B. Foster *sub tit.* LIVING PICTURES: THEIR HISTORY, PHOTOPRODUCTION AND PRACTICAL WORKING, WITH CLASSIFIED LISTS OF BRITISH PATENTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

London: The Hatton Press, 1915.
x, 377 pp. illus. bibl. index.

4. **Jay Leyda** KINO: A HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN AND SOVIET FILM.

London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960.
495 pp. 16 pl. illus. filmog. bibl. index.

5. **Ernest Lindgren** THE ART OF THE FILM: AN INTRODUCTION TO FILM APPRECIATION.

London: George Allen & Unwin, 1948.
xiv, 242 pp. 16 pl. index.

2nd ed. in preparation.

6. **Kurt London** FILM MUSIC: A SUMMARY OF THE CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF ITS HISTORY, AESTHETICS, TECHNIQUE, AND POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS.

London: Faber & Faber, 1936.
280 pp. 8 pl. index.

With a foreword by Constant Lambert.

7. **Arthur Elton** and **Peter Brinson** (for Film Centre) THE FILM INDUSTRY IN SIX EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

Paris: Unesco, 1950.
156 pp. bibl.

A detailed study of the film industry in Denmark as compared with that in Norway, Sweden, Italy, France and the United Kingdom.

8. **Rachael Low** and **Roger Manvell** THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH FILM 1896-1906.

London: George Allen & Unwin, 1948.
136 pp. 16 pl. bibl. index.

9. **Rachael Low** THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH FILM 1906-1914.

London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949.
309 pp. 10 pl. bibl. index.

10. **Rachael Low** THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH FILM 1914-1918.
London : George Allen & Unwin, 1950.
332 pp. 12 pl. bibl. index.
These three volumes were published under the joint auspices of the British Film Institute and the British Film Academy, and were the basis for a thesis for Doctor of Philosophy in the University of London.
A history of the British film industry and an analysis of the films produced and their method of production.

11. **Roger Manvell** (ed.) EXPERIMENT IN THE FILM.
London : Grey Walls Press, 1949.
285 pp. 8 pl. index.
Essays on the experimental development of the cinema in France, U.S.A., Russia, Germany and Austria, Britain, by Roger Manvell, Jacques B. Brunius, Lewis Jacobs, Grigori Roshal, Roman Karmen, Ernst Iros, Hans Richter, Edgar Anstey, John Maddison.

12. **Roger Manvell** FILM.
London : Penguin Books, 1944.
192 pp. 32 pl. filmog. bibl. index.
2nd ed. revised and enlarged.
London : Penguin Books, 1946.
240 pp. 32 pl. filmog. bibl. index.
3rd ed. further revised and enlarged.
London : Penguin Books, 1950.
288 pp. 40 pl. filmog. bibl. index.
A basic manual of film appreciation.

13. **Allardyce Nicoll** FILM AND THEATRE.
London : George G. Harrap, 1936.
xi, 255 pp. bibl. index.
An analysis of the cinema as an art form by comparing it with the theatre, especially the Elizabethan theatre, and by comparing stage and screen treatment of particular dramas, e.g. *The Barretts of Wimpole Street.*

14. **George Pearson** FLASHBACK : THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BRITISH FILM-MAKER.
London : George Allen & Unwin, 1957.
236 pp. front. 12 pl. filmog. index.

15. **P.E.P. (Political and Economic Planning)** THE BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY : A REPORT ON ITS HISTORY AND PRESENT ORGANISATION, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF BRITISH FEATURE FILM PRODUCTION.
London : P.E.P., 1952.
307 pp. index.
Supplemented by THE BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY, 1958.
London : P.E.P., 1958.
Offprint from *Planning* vol. XXIV No. 424 pp. 1, 132-170.

16. **Karel Reisz** (wr. & comp.) THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM EDITING.

London and New York : Focal Press, 1953.
285 pp. illus. glossary of terms. bibl. index.

Introduction by Thorold Dickinson. Written and compiled with the guidance of a committee appointed by the British Film Academy (Thorold Dickinson, chairman ; Reginald Beck, Roy Boulting, Sidney Cole, Robert Hamer, Jack Harris, David Lean, Ernest Lindgren, Harry Miller, Basil Wright).

17. **Paul Rotha** CELLULOID : THE FILM TODAY.

London : Longmans, Green & Co., 1931.
xv, 259 pp. front. 15 pl. index.

A series of essays and film reviews.

18. **Paul Rotha** DOCUMENTARY FILM.

London : Faber & Faber, 1936.
272 pp. front. 31 pl. filmog. index.

Preface by John Grierson.

2nd ed. revised and enlarged *sub tit.* DOCUMENTARY FILM : THE USE OF THE FILM MEDIUM TO INTERPRET CREATIVELY AND IN SOCIAL TERMS THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE AS IT EXISTS IN REALITY.

London : Faber & Faber, 1939.
320 pp. front. 39 pl. filmog. index.

3rd ed. revised and enlarged in collaboration with Sinclair Road and Richard Griffith.

London : Faber & Faber, 1952.
412 pp. front. 32 pl. index.

19. **Paul Rotha** THE FILM TILL NOW : A SURVEY OF THE CINEMA.

London : Jonathan Cape, 1930.
362 pp. front. 48 pl. filmog. bibl. index.

2nd ed. revised and enlarged *sub tit.* THE FILM TILL NOW : A SURVEY OF THE WORLD CINEMA. With an additional section by Richard Griffith.

London : Vision Press, 1949.
755 pp. front. 66 pl. filmog. bibl. index.

3rd ed. revised and enlarged, with an additional section by Richard Griffith.

London : Vision Press, 1960.
820 pp. front. 66 pl. filmog. bibl. index.

A mainly historical survey of the world cinema, especially concentrating on U.S.A., Russia, Germany, France, Great Britain.

20. **Paul Rotha** ROTHA ON THE FILM : A SELECTION OF WRITINGS ABOUT THE CINEMA.
London : Faber & Faber, 1958.
338 pp. front. 14 pl. illus. index.

21. **Marie Seton** SERGEI M. EISENSTEIN : A BIOGRAPHY.
London : The Bodley Head, 1952.
533 pp. front. 32 pl. illus. index.

22. **Raymond Spottiswoode** A GRAMMAR OF THE FILM : AN ANALYSIS OF FILM TECHNIQUE.
London : Faber & Faber, 1935.
326 pp. front. 15 pl. inset table. index.

2nd. ed.
London : Faber & Faber, 1955.
326 pp. front. 14 pl. inset table. index.

# BOOK REVIEWS

*The Japanese Film : Art and Industry* by Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Richie. Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Japan : Charles E. Tuttle, 1959. 456 pp. and 144 plates. $7.50 (British agents : Mark Paterson & Co. 63s.).

Were Bresson to make a film about the obsessive inner life of a sex-maniac, it is unlikely that any relatively reputable critic would accuse him of wishing to add to the store of world pornography. Yet this is what happened to Kon Ichikawa when his film *Kagi* (variously translated as *The Key* and *Obsession*) was shown at Cannes this year. Some knowledge of his early career (" the Japanese Frank Capra "), as well as reflection on the fact that he had just previously made *The Burmese Harp* and *Conflagration*, would have at least indicated that his business was with the nature of obsession and not with pornography.

Over the last nine years, a fair number of Japanese films have been shown in Europe, but we have gleaned little knowledge of the industry itself, the background, or even the earlier history of the major directors, so that films have tended to be judged in isolation. It was some years before we were able to realise that Kurosawa's world was not solely the formal one of samurai, bandits and sword-fights, that in *Living* he had matched De Sica on his own neo-realist ground. It was only this year that the National Film Theatre dislocated comfortable impressions of Kinugasa, formed largely from the measured and formal beauty of *Gate of Hell*, by showing his remarkable experiment from silent days, *Crossroads*. When Ozu's *Tokyo Story* was shown in London in 1957, considerable technical excitement was aroused (and rightly so) by his brilliant use of low-angle shots from an almost stationary camera : but this style had been Ozu's for all of twenty-five years. We have merely sampled the work of such great veterans as Gosho, Mizoguchi, and Ozu himself. And about all this treasure, European historians are silent.

The need for a detailed history of the Japanese cinema was a pressing one, and the work of Joseph Anderson and Donald Richie should be welcomed with open arms. *The Japanese Film* is undoubtedly an important book. It is painstaking, thorough, just in judgment, and (as far as it is possible to check, when they have just provided the first real source book) accurate. The pity of it all is that a little more thought and a more careful arrangement would have turned an excellent guide into a first-class reference book. This latter we still await, but at least Messrs. Anderson and Richie have done the difficult spade-work.

In the first half of the book, the study of the growth of the industry is admirable. The rise and fall of the different companies is meticulously traced, showing how each company specialised in a particular genre, and how that genre developed. Since the Japanese cinema tends to be divided much more rigidly than the cinema as we know it, the clear exposition of the nature and scope of such genres as the *shomin-geki* (drama about common people), *Shinkokugeki* (realistic period drama), *jidai-geki* (period drama), *gendai-geki* (film about contemporary life), *haha-mono* (mother films), and so on, is extremely useful. Interwoven with this picture of the industry, is a chronological survey of the films themselves, divided somewhat arbitrarily into periods. Apart from the post-war period, where the authors were obviously more personally involved, little attempt has been made to relate closely the films of a particular period to the state (political, financial or intellectual) of the country at the time. Instead, the survey is punctuated by synopses of numerous films (often useful, as with Kinugasa's *Crossroads* or Yamanaka's *Humanity and Paper Balloons*, but sometimes mere story-lines which reveal nothing of the style or value of the film).

This endless stream of often meaningless synopses eventually becomes irritating. Quite obviously, the authors have been troubled by the fact that they are trying to give as complete a picture of the industry as possible, and have therefore referred to as many films as they could find room for. Equally obviously, they have not seen a number of the films, and the synopses are therefore doubly meaningless: surely some of them could have been relegated to footnotes, for the record, as Jeanne and Ford did in their *Histoire Encyclopédique*? A further irritation is that few of the films mentioned have their dates appended. There is no filmography, even selected, and if you wish to refer to a film, you may have the exasperating task of hunting back a couple of pages to date a film "made the following year." The material is there, and a filmography would have added immeasurably to the value of the book as a reference work. In the same way, a bibliography is a sore need. Not much has been written in the West until recently, but what there is (e.g., de Mèredieu's *Le Cinéma Japonais en 1928*, published in *Cinémagazine* No. 52, deserves to be recorded.

The second half of the book, when the authors are free of the history, is easier going and just as useful. The series of essays—"Content," "Technique," "Directors," "Actors," "Theaters and Audiences"—comprise, in effect, a critique of Japanese attitudes to the cinema, giving some idea of the standards and methods of the industry. It is both fascinating and helpful to learn, for example, that "a number of directors order music directly and they usually want something in imitation of famous existing works—something

they can whistle," and that *Rashomon*, with its pastiche of Ravel's *Bolero*, did not escape. Or, that "Japanese society is so rigidly organised that it tends to discourage any of those larger objects of emotional concern—Lear's madness, Hamlet's indecision." Obviously, of course, the disappearance of the *Buke Hatto* code of feudal loyalty and the Japanese adaptation of the Confucian system of ethics (which did not contain the ideas of good and evil, but simply of order and disorder), has allowed greater scope. But still Japanese films are characterised mainly by, on the one hand, the quiet splendour of Gosho and Ozu in their "small" themes, and on the other by extreme sentimentality when "big" themes are touched upon.

The chapter on directors contains brief, but sympathetic and penetrating studies of nine of the major directors (Mizoguchi, Gosho, Ozu, Naruse, Toyoda, Kinoshita, Kurosawa, Yoshimura, Imai) which whet the appetite for full-length studies, and for similar studies of directors not included, such as Yamanaka, Kinugasa and Ichikawa.

The whole book is beautifully produced, copiously and excellently illustrated. It is, in fact, a book which nobody interested in the Japanese cinema should be without—at least until it is replaced by a more definitive reference work, quite probably from the same authors.

TOM MILNE.

*När Filmen Kom till Sverige : Charles Magnusson och Svenska Bio* (with captions and a summary in English) by Bengt Idestam-Almquist (Robin Hood). Stockholm : P. A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1959. 611 pp. 30 kronor. ("When the Film came to Sweden : Charles Magnusson and Svenska Bio.").

The Swedish film archive, Filmhistoriska Samlingarna, has been in existence for more than twenty years. It is probably the oldest film museum in the world. This remarkable fact is closely connected with the early activities of Dr. Bengt Idestam-Almquist as a film historian. Dr. Idestam-Almquist started his career as a film critic of *Stockholms-Tidningen*—with the pen-name of Robin Hood—as early as 1923. About ten years later he published (in collaboration with Ragnar Allberg) his first book on his investigations into the Swedish silent cinema, "*Vid den svenska filmens vagga*" (At the Cradle of the Swedish cinema). Though mainly a journalistic achievement, this small book of film history contained the germ of serious scholarly research into the Swedish film tradition.

Dr. Idestam-Almquist influenced considerably the development of the Swedish film archive, which was organized by Einar Lauritzen, still head of Filmhistoriska Samlingarna. In 1939, Idestam-Almquist's study of the classical Swedish cinema, "*Svenska filmens drama : Sjöström och Stiller*" (The Dramatic Creation of the Swedish Film : Sjöström and Stiller) appeared, marking the foundation of a purposeful research into Swedish film history. For two decades this comprehensive volume has exerted a decisive influence upon our knowledge of the masters of the Swedish silent film. The flowing, narrative style of Idestam-Almquist has still an admirable freshness, but the author's impressionistic close-up technique in describing the artistic progress of Sjöström and Stiller gives only a vague concept of the period itself.

In 1951, Idestam-Almquist made his position as leading Scandinavian film historian secure by a psychological and aesthetic analysis of S. Eisenstein. Through his unique direct experience of the Russia of the revolution period, Idestam-Almquist's "*Eisenstein, ett konstnärs öde i Sovjet*" (E., the Fate of an Artist in Soviet) presented a monograph infused with illuminating and sympathetic knowledge, suggestively rich in perspectives.

Idestam-Almquist's most important work on the Swedish silent cinema appeared in 1959. It is entitled "*När filmen kom till Sverige: Charles Magnusson och Svenska Bio*" (When the Film Came to Sweden: C. Magnusson and Svenska Bio). In a broad panoramic sweep the author here presents the years of establishment of the Swedish cinema. The untiring researcher depicts the growth of the first cinemas, developing from the picturesque sphere of itinerant cinema exhibitors. Exhaustively, Idestam-Almquist analyses the economic factors which made possible the amazing expansion of Svenska Biografteatern (Svenska Bio) and the first international epoch of the Swedish film.

Late in 1919, the film companies Svenska Bio and Skandia were merged into Svensk Filmindustri. In 1957, Svensk Filmindustri celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of Svenska Bio, among other things by financing the publication of *När filmen kom till Sverige*. Dr. Carl Anders Dymling, the chairman of Svensk Filmindustri, took the initiative and gave the author a free hand to narrate the evolution of the Swedish cinema at length.

Idestam-Almquist has rewarded the confidence of his patron generously, not least by his refusal to write a cinema history in the conventional style. However, his keenness for revaluations and new discoveries—with a few exceptions—causes as many surprises as useful results. The complicated origin of the film medium has in few works been given a better, a more graphically concentrated and clearly illuminated description than in the long opening chapter of this book.

To all those who have studied the first primitive era of the celluloid film (1895-1908), it is quite obvious that the first exhibitions of film were connected with and were a continuation of that lively tradition of the previous century—the magic lantern. Film and theatre have developed in parallel, and they have in turn influenced each other. In his studies of theatrical history, Professor Gösta M. Bergman has shown how the theatre in the early 19th century gave inspiration to the then popular magic lantern, moving panorama pictures and lighting effects. Dr. Idestam-Almquist states emphatically that *montage* with its characteristic switch between interior, medium-shot and close-up, between interior and exterior existed in a developed form in magic lantern dramas.

*När filmen kom till Sverige* is a work which shows persistently purposeful research of remarkable accuracy. Perfect detective investigation lies behind the solutions the author presents of some of the mysteries which have baffled Scandinavian research workers up to now. He gives convincing evidence that it was the German film pioneer Max Skladanowsky who made the first film in Sweden—a fragmentary sketch using professional actors—when he visited Stockholm, in 1896, and that this film—contrary to what had previously been supposed—was never shown in Stockholm. It was premiered in Stettin in the late winter of 1897. The first real Swedish films were made in 1897 by the photographer Ernest

Florman for showing at an exhibition cinema. Dr. Idestam-Almquist throws an interesting light on them and compares them favourably with productions elsewhere during that period.

It has been generally accepted that the first film show in Sweden took place on Sunday, June 28th, 1896, at Sommarteatern (The Summer Theatre) at an industrial exhibition in Malmö, Sweden's third largest city and situated just opposite Copenhagen. Idestam-Almquist has, though vainly, gone to infinite pains to prove that film shows took place even earlier in Sweden. In his efforts to change the official beginning of the film era in Sweden and especially to give it much more favourable placing, the author abandons his previous scientific approach in favour of verbal testimony. Also in some other instances Idestam-Almquist shows a precarious disposition to give way to wishful thinking, misled by his ingenious imagination.

Incorrect, indeed, is thus the author's contention that Stockholm in "Panorama International" already in 1897 had a permanent cinema. This attraction was not a cinema, but, like its competitor the "Passage Panorama," an exhibition hall where hand-coloured stereoscopic lantern slides were shown. In such an extensive work as this such an oversight can happen, and is almost inescapable. All the more unreservedly must one admire Dr. Idestam-Almquist's ability to present in lively and graphic scenes the miscellaneous but still honourable band of "jokers" and music-hall artists showing films prior to the first world war. Meritoriously the author succeeds in saving from anonymity Nils Jacobsen Le Tort, a somewhat enigmatic figure who established the first permanent cinemas in Sweden. Before the first world war Le Tort abandoned his Swedish business, emigrating to England, the native country of his wife.

The author allows himself plenty of time dwelling in the motley crowd of robust pioneers, before he arrives at the first permanent film studio in Sweden, that of Svenska Bio in Kristianstad, where Charles Magnusson started his career as a film producer, in 1909. However, this long approach undeniably provides some of the most fascinating material in the book. Charles Magnusson is portrayed with a wealth of detail and drawn with intuition and sympathy. Though Idestam-Almquist also here relies a little too much upon his creative imagination, being as much an artist as a scholar, his attempt at a psychological analysis of the complicated person behind the Janus-face of the producer is very engrossing and probably quite right in essentials.

The author gives a picture of Magnusson as a considerate magnate, a company director who was an artist and a businessman at the same time. Perhaps the explanation of Magnusson's unique success was primarily due to his unusual ability to choose the right collaborators. The man behind Sjöström and Stiller was a source of inspiration on a grand scale. Like the other great film pioneers, D. W. Griffith and Erich Pommer, he was in all his practicality a visionary with a creative imagination.

Charles Magnusson began his career as a photographer. The world-wide fame achieved by the Swedish film was firmly based on its artistic photography. Magnusson let his cameramen experiment and by that means achieved creative results. Already as a photographer Magnusson had shown an open mind for nature and his attitude was to leave its mark on the products of Svenska Bio. Magnusson detested all that smacked of the theatre and artificiality.

He wanted settings which were living and acting which was like real people. Thus Magnusson formed the basis of a film style which had as one of its fundamentals man in relationship to nature. It was this style that was to create the first completely genuine and psychologically true picture of people in film history.

Bengt Idestam-Almquist's *När filmen kom till Sverige* describes with admirable perspicuity and untiring spirit the development of the Swedish film from Magnusson's first feature production *Värmlänningarne* (The People of Värmland Province) up to the artistic masterpiece of *Körkarlen* directed by Victor Sjöström, in 1920, from the novel of the Swedish Nobel Prize winner Selma Lagerlöf. The dynamic descriptive method of the author ensures that this thick volume is never dull. For future film research in Sweden *När filmen kom till Sverige* is destined to be the fundamental basis, not least because of the thorough reference material, thus placing this volume close to the works of Dr. Rachael Low. An abundance of footnotes directs the reader to the original sources, encouraging further studies. It is an exceptionally attractive volume and its international value is guaranteed by the unique and illuminating illustrations which are also captioned in English, and there is a summary in English too.

It is devoutly to be wished that Dr. Bengt Idestam-Almquist will find time to subject Sjöström and Stiller to a revised and deepened study. At first hand a monograph on Victor Sjöström is eagerly wanted. Idestam-Almquist keeps all the keys to the successful solution of such a task.

RUNE WALDEKRANZ.

*Om Filmen: Artikler og Interviews* by Carl Th. Dreyer, edited by Erik Ulrichsen. Copenhagen: Nyt Norsk Forlag Arnold Busck, 1959. 95 pp. illus. Kr. 15.00 ("On the Film: Articles and Interviews").

On the occasion of Carl Dreyer's 70th birthday on February 20th, 1959, a collection of his articles and interviews was selected and compiled by the Danish film critic Erik Ulrichsen and issued under the title "Carl Th. Dreyer on the Film." The result was an extremely good book. Strangely enough, even here in Denmark it is scarcely realised that Dreyer is an excellent writer and those who have seen his films will hardly believe that he uses an exceptionally strong, clear and correct literary style. But this is so; moreover he is very easy to understand and anyone can read and enjoy him. Dreyer's ability is without doubt derived from his earlier start as a journalist and time and again he has turned back to journalism. Among other things he wrote an enchanting series in the thirties called "Life in the Courts" (*Livet i Byretten*) which ran in the popular Copenhagen mid-day paper "B.T." It consisted of short snatches of real life dialogue but adapted by a great artist. For a short period he was also a film critic; and in his brilliant biographical preface Erik Ulrichsen has his claws out occasionally, especially when he refers to Carl Dreyer's surprisingly short career as a critic. For the "B.T." was of the opinion that his reviews had one great fault—"they were critical! *Jeanne D'Arc's* director was hurriedly removed from

his job as film critic for "B.T." One hardly knows whether to laugh or cry. Concerning films, Danish philistinism seems to be boundless and the removal of Dreyer as film critic is one of the most sinister examples there is." Dreyer must have enjoyed this controversial tone, for later on in the book we see several examples of himself as a controversialist.

Read attentively "Carl Th. Dreyer on the Film" is a profitable analysis of a great film artist's work from year to year. Dreyer in fact discusses with himself and others manuscripts, the insignificance of the director, the style of acting, the camera, contrasts and comparisons between film and theatre, cutting, rhythm and so on, so we get a clear (and as far as Dreyer is concerned, unconscious) insight into the cinema's artistic development from January, 1920, up to the present day. Some of the points of view appear to be out of date but they can be used as guidance, others are strangely foresighted, as when Dreyer in "The Real Speaking Film" (*Den Virkelige Talefilm*) in 1933 maps out neo-realism without actually knowing the word.

There is one great advantage about this book—it includes a theatre discussion about Karel Capek's play *The Mother* (*Moderen*) produced at the Betty Nansen Theatre in Copenhagen in 1939, the producer and star of the show being the one and the same magnificent actress, Betty Nansen herself. The performance became a public fiasco and Carl Dreyer gave an explanation. He flung sharp criticism at Mrs. Nansen's characterization of the dead who appear to her as the mother who in her old age has become clairvoyant and sees her dear ones before her. Dreyer proposes a production of a completely different character, where the dead are *less* real, they should only be hinted at as they, without form or colour, glide past. "Their voices ought to have been heard from shadowy half-light, their forms only perceptibly dim, occasionally grazing the lamp light's ray. Just for a few seconds it was like this, near the end of act II, and the effect was overwhelming." Author and theatre critic Mogens Dam answered on behalf of those offended by accusing Dreyer of demanding country castle ghosts with long white sheets, green countenances and bony skeleton-like hands in defiance of Capek's instructions. Dreyer replied that, on the contrary, his viewpoint is in harmony with Capek's stage directions as Capek imagines the dead as though living—*except that they make less noise than living mortals.* Dreyer says: "But silence and darkness are twins. The darkness deepens the silence and complete silence only thrives on complete darkness. Both darkness and silence incite the imagination. . . . Forgive me for saying this, but yours [and Mrs. Nansen's] interpretation has more to do with literature than theatre." What we see here in print is not only a vision of what arose in post-war theatre style but an accurate explanation of the immense psychological and dramatic importance light and darkness have in a film. Dreyer has employed this technique in his own films and one therefore understands his reaction when he encounters badly managed lighting in the theatre.

The book gives an excellent insight into the work so far accomplished on Dreyer's film about Christ. The aesthetic problems are up to date with articles on colour films, the adaptation of Kaj Munk's play *The Word* (*Ordet*) to a film, photographic technique and cast production. What then is Dreyer's minimum demand of a director? It is to be found in the following quotation from 1955: "The

ambitious director must seek higher reality than that which he can achieve by just putting up a camera and taking pictures from real life. His pictures must not only be a visual experience but also a spiritual one."

BENT GRASTEN.

*Historien om Dansk Film* by Ebbe Neergaard, Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1960. 177 pp. illus. Kr. 15.75 ("The History of the Danish Film").

The late Head of the Statens Filmcentral in Copenhagen, Ebbe Neergaard, had, not only in Denmark but also abroad, a very fine name as a film theorist; and his chief contribution, as far as foreigners are concerned, must be the articles and books he wrote about Carl Dreyer. But it also came to light that, at his sudden and unexpectedly early death in 1957, a complete manuscript existed with the title "The History of the Danish Film." Only the most energetic of those interested in the cinema are presumably aware that Danish films, for a short period before and during the early years of the first world war, had something approaching world domination. That a small country like Denmark could go so far was due to two reasons: firstly, that the silent film was independent of language; secondly, and by far the most important, the existence of a man named Ole Olsen, the creator of "Nordisk Films." In 1906 he owned a small cinema on one of the main streets in Copenhagen and when King Christian IX died he saw his chance: Lit de Parade, the funeral, the proclamation of the new King Frederik VIII—it was all filmed by the cinema owner Ole Olsen and his quick little camera operator Sorensen. Ole Olsen sold so many copies of that film that within a few months he started the "Nordisk Film Company" whose emblem, the polar bear, was to be as renowned as M.G.M's roaring lion.

It is evident that Ebbe Neergaard had here material that will be a delicacy for everyone with an interest in films and a gold mine for a film historian. It was really a fairy tale and not just an economic one; for Ole Olsen was also a man who, within limits, understood the wisdom of letting his colleagues develop the budding film art's yet unknown laws. In Ole Olsen's hands the hitherto compulsory melodrama got a social twist that made it more realistic and therefore more exciting, and that type of film came to be frequently copied abroad. Ebbe Neergaard is an excellent writer and profound. It would surprise a Danish audience that he is not content merely to enrol Ole Olsen among the film magnates! We Danes have a tedious tendency to explain our great events on the basis that they are surprising and not normal. The unforeseen and infrequent and surprising cannot be repeated once it is finished—that is to say when its glory no longer gilds our existence daily and noticeably—and therefore it can only be forgotten. And forgotten it is. It is possible, even probable, that we shall never be able to reach the level of Ole Olsen's infallible grip on a great chance, because the chances look different today; but no-one can forbid anyone to be talented and foresighted, and no-one can forbid anyone to regard the developments in other countries and learn from them. If the Danish cinema does not mean so much to Danes today, and absolutely

nothing to foreigners, it is not—to put it mildly—because Ole Olsen died a natural death in 1943. At that time he had been out of business for more than 20 years.

Ebbe Neergaard's portrayal of the golden and less golden years until speaking pictures were born is as exciting as a novel, witty and objective and carried out with an excellent use of quotations at those points where they have great dramatic effect. In its entirety it is very instructive; like all art history it is also packed with knowledge of human nature. Neergaard weighs and appraises Ole Olsen and his artistes in so many different ways, that one is able to draw one's own final conclusions. Recent research into the Danish cinema has led to a succession of revaluations which are very objectively accounted for in "The History of the Danish Film."

Ole Olsen was far from faultless, and he cannot be acquitted of helping the much too hurried decline after the first world war. When Urban Gad made *Afgrunden* in 1910 with the young Asta Nielsen, Ole Olsen was just as uninterested in her as the Danish theatre was. Her acting was the most promising warning for the future that a producer or director could wish for, but they *would not recognise it*, no matter how much the audiences instantly saw and demanded it. Some wonderful, unheard of talent appears, something which can also earn a fantastic amount of money, pure box office, but nevertheless everyone tries to crush it! Ebbe Neergaard naturally stops at this point. Later on he said about the decline in the twenties: "The films must have been the cause. Perhaps the audiences changed without Nordisk Films following suit."

The period of the talkie has its lighter sides, but nevertheless it is typical that a few of even the best Danish films cannot give occasion for greater examination. Ebbe Neergaard therefore does not let his reader lose interest, except perhaps during the last pages where he must refuse to commit himself out of courtesy.

The Danish film critic Erik Ulrichsen carries on the work, covering the Danish cinema from 1956, when the manuscript was concluded, up to the present day.

It would be useful for Ebbe Neergaard's characteristic essays, at least those about the Danish silent film period, to be brought out and read by a world-wide public. Occasionally one finds here the work of a cultural pioneer, occasionally a cultural farce, but it is all an important link in film history which is here described by a very eminent writer.

BENT GRASTEN.

The review of Jay Leyda's history of the Russian cinema, *Kino*, has been unavoidably delayed, and will appear in the next issue.

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